

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3365

ANSWERED ON:22.12.2008

RAINFED AREA

Chavda Shri Harisinh Pratapsinh

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the total rainfed area under agriculture and its percentage in total agricultural land in the country;
- (b) the reasons for not providing irrigation facilities in such areas;
- (c) the steps taken by the Government for optimal utilisation of rain water to provide maximum benefits to the farmers; and
- (d) the success achieved therein so far?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA)

- (a): As per available estimates about 85 million ha. is rainfed area which is about 60% of total net sown area in the country.
- (b): Difficult topographical and geographical terrain, limited ground water availability and constraints in spreading surface water irrigation infrastructure are the main reasons for not providing assured irrigation in the entire net sown areas.
- (c) & (d): Government of India has accorded high priority to the holistic and sustainable development of rainfed areas through the Integrated Watershed Development Programmes. Following Watershed Development Programmes are under implementation with the major objectives of reduction in soil erosion and land degradation, reduction of run-off by increasing time of concentration, creating additional water storage for supplementary/live saving irrigation, increasing moisture regime etc.
 - (i) National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NWDPA).
 - (ii) Soil Conservation in the Catchment of River Valley Projects and Flood Prone Rivers (RVP & FPR).
 - (iii) Reclamation and Development of Alkali and Acid Soils.
 - (iv) Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Area (WDPSA)
 - (v) Desert Development Programme (DDP)
 - (vi) Integrated Wasteland Development Programme (IWDP)
 - (vii) Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP)

The comprehensive assessment of the aforesaid Watershed Development Programmes made by International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) revealed that the programmes have helped in increasing additional water storage capacity for supplementary/live saving irrigation, increase in cropping intensity and productivity, farmers income and reduction in soil erosion & run off.